Tadjik

*563 The Sarikol Valley lies
131 close to the point where the Chinese,
Soviet and Afghan frontiers meet, but the frontiers are not well defined, have been disputed in the past, and may be disputed
[466] again. The Sarikolis are resentful of Chinese rule, especially because of the burdens imposed on them for supplying men and animals, without pay or for insufficient pay, to keep open a high mountain route between Sinkiang and India which is used by official travelers and to a smaller extent by traders. This discontent might take the form of an attempt to break away from Chinese rule, but if so it is not clear what other people they would prefer to join.

*563 There are two Iranian languages spoken in adjoining districts.
197 One is the Pamir group of dialects, spoken in the Wakhan Valley of Afghanistan and in the Mountain Badakshan Autonomous Region enclosed within the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic. The other is Tajik. Thus the question whether the Sarikolis speak Tajik or Pamir Iranian is important, but there is as yet no authoritative answer.

*563 The Sarikolis are said by Grenard to be a remnant of the early
174 inhabitants of Khotan who left documents dating from the period 200–400 A.D. in the Saka language, a now extinct Indo-Iranian tongue. T'ang Dynasty Chinese records likewise describe the Sarikolis as identical in external appearance and language with
[779] the inhabitants of Khotan. At that time they were devout adherents of Buddhism, maintaining no less than ten monasteries in their little kingdom. The Chinese first conquered the region in the T'ang Dynasty and established there a military post which marked the extreme point of Chinese military occupation in Central Asia.

*563 Subsequently the people were converted to Islam. They now
779 adhere to the Ismaili sect of the Moslem faith, which acknowl-
212 edges the Agha Khan in Bombay as its head. Culturally they are extremely backward, and are still without a written language.

*563 The people live for the most part as settled cultivators despite
241 the fact that the Sarikol Valley nowhere drops below 10,000 feet.
311 Irrigation is practiced, and the main crops are oats, barley, and
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[p. 138]

1: Washington S-4 (no date) 1956 AF13 Northwest China AF13
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N **E. Population Problems**

563 1. Traditional Antagonism Between the Moslems and the Chinese

578 669 648 175 Of the many problems in regard to the population of Northwest China, the traditional antagonism between the Moslems and the Chinese, together with its international complications, is by far the most serious. Moslem uprisings have been frequent and often caused great massacres on both sides. In most cases the Moslem disturbances are supported and made use of by ambitious neighboring powers, particularly Russia - both Tsarist and Soviet. In 1871 Tsarist Russia used the 1861-1874 Moslem disturbance as a pretext to occupy the Ili Valley and then force China to cede the lower part of the Valley, west of Khargos to Russia. Time and again Russia took advantage of Moslem troubles in Sinkiang to make some special territorial, political and economic demands in the provinces, i.e., free trade in Sinkiang by the Ili Commercial Treaty of 1851 and the cession of the territory west of Tarbagatai by the treaty of Chuguchak (Ta-cheng) in 1864.

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648 Sinkiang had always been a center of international intrigue between Russia and Britain for the spoils of Central Asia, as well as the barometer of power relations between Russia and China. (See Foreign Relations).

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642 2. The Uighur Autonomy

179 [668] Under the Chinese Communist Regime, Sinkiang became the Uighur Autonomous Area in September, 1955. A National Autonomy for Sinkiang was first recommended by General Chang Chih-chung, a liberal Nationalist Government high official in 1946-49. He was "influenced by views of American politicians who insisted that the principle of self-government should be applied to Sinkiang also - an illusory wish for a people which stood between Russia and China, like a mouse between two cats." (CNA. No. 103, October 7, 1955).

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167 708 466 A continuous great influx of Chinese to Sinkiang has occurred, which is particularly marked by the present-day Army Construction Corps and the presence of the Corrective Labor Force. The soldiers are sent to meet the urgent demand of labor to undertake the gigantic construction program and the latter, estimated at several hundred thousands, are condemned to forced labor in the thinly populated border areas. (See: Labor).

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642 668 179 "Since the Chinese Communist troops entered Sinkiang, the rulers have always been Chinese, and at present, with the introduction of autonomy, this Chinese domination is the more emphasized." (CNA. No. 103, October 7, 1955). Furthermore, Government officials are transferred from Peking to Sinkiang in large numbers. On August 21, 1955, seventy-nine officials from the "First Grade Offices" of the Central Government left Peking for Sinkiang; at the same time

433 increase of 11.5 percent in the combined areas of Inner Mongolian, Sinkiang, and T'ung Autonomous Area in Kweichow. (KM. October 4, 1955). Supposing the increase in Sinkiang was ten percent which owing to the heavy natural disasters in 1954 is probably too high an estimate, it would mean 1.76 million tons of food stuffs in 1954, i.e. about 430 catties per head. In this context, a report which claimed that food production is 747 catty per head was published (KM. September 15, 1955).

311 312 185 Soil conservation is just as important as water conservation in land reclamation in arid and semi-arid areas. Human survival in Sinkiang for over 2,000 years has been involved in a continual fight against the aridity of the climate and the central Asiatic agricultural alkali, salt-saturated soil. Every year's floods convert even hitherto fertile lands into alkali, sterile soil. There are "Kariz" wells which are connected by underground canals, reaching a total length of 2,500 km. between Hami and Turfan only. This is evidently a means of combating the impermeability of the soil, which makes surface irrigation harmful.

503 653 According to 1954 Government Reports, 50,000 long or short canals with a total length of 30,000 km. have been repaired by the Army and by the people. (PD. August 28, 1955). In an October 1955 report: 1,600 canals are under repair and also 1,500 wells have been added (PD. October 21, 1955).

311 312 185 Large scale irrigation and water conservancy work are at present in the state of planning only: survey works are going on at the Manas and Urumchi Rivers and at the Turfan Basin for the future building of larger irrigation works and hydraulic power stations. (PD. October 31, 1955). But to fight against alkali soil will remain a continuous problem in land reclamation in Sinkiang as well as elsewhere in the arid and semi-arid Northwest of China. It was reported in 1955 that 300,000 mou of alkali land were reclaimed around Chigalik Lake in the northeast Hami area, and southwest Aksu. Rice has been planted in the former too, and cotton in the latter area. How long will the newly reclaimed land reclaim productive under the ever-increasing accumulation of alkali in the soil is still a problem which remains to be solved.

2. Soldier Colonization

433 648 167 466 Although no data concerning the exact number of Chinese soldiers in Sinkiang are available, the figures must be enormous - judged by the gigantic work undertaken by Chinese soldiers under the name of "Production and Construction Troops of the Sinkiang Military Area." One million one hundred thousand mou (166,000 acres) of the three million mou extended arable land during the period 1949-55 are due to the labor of the Army

433 Agrarian Production Troops. More than 40,000 mou are
648 using machines bought from Soviet Russia. The Army Agrarian
167 Production Troops themselves produced 31,000 tons of winter
466 wheat crop on 440,000 mou (124 catty per mou) in the spring of 1955. They are expected to produce 23,500 tons of cotton on 150,000 mou (310 catty per mou) in the same year. (PD. October 9, 1955). Eighty thousand out of the 150,000 mou cotton are at the Manas River (PD. June 29, and October 1, 1955). Forty-five percent of the total agricultural work of the Army troops is now being done by machines. (Report of Tao Shih-yu eh, Cf. CNA. No. 103, p. 2 or PD. September 27, 1955). In 1954 the total cotton cultivating area in Sinkiang was 800,000 mou. In 1955 it was supposed to be increased to 1,160,000 mou (PD. March 9, 1955).

The working troops of the Army are also developing virgin soil with the help of 184 tractors. The development of 600,000 mou south of Tien-shan chain of mountains was planned for 1955. It was reported in May and June 1955 that the troops had already broken up 20,000 mou of virgin land. Around Urumchi, one tractor works ten mou in an hour.

The Army is also taking part in the industrial development of Sinkiang and since 1950 has been constructing a textile mill, and iron and steel plant, a cement works, a power generator factory and coal mines. (PD. April 4, 1952; KM March 3, 1954; PD March 13, October 30, 1954 and July 14, 1955: KM September 16, 1955; and PD September 27, 1955).

"It would seem strange that the regular Army should engage in all these works. The production and construction troops which undertake the most arduous labor in inhuman, primitive conditions, undoubtedly consist of that multitude condemned to corrective labor in the border areas, of whom the Ministry of Public Security spoke of as people who will never come back from the border areas." (Cf. CNA Nos. 53 and 56.)

167 In addition to the exile of corrective laborers, a great number
466 of youngsters, boys and girls (apart from thousands of Party
177 cadres and several hundred thousands of soldiers) even from Junior Middle Schools are also being transferred to Sinkiang. In one single group 540 such youngsters traveled from Nanking (PD. August 26, 1955). The idea probably is that these youngsters going at an early age to Sinkiang will be more easily acclimatized.

3. A Resume of Possibilities and Their Limitations.

433 It has been estimated that the planned annual increase of 6.2 million long tons of grain can at most support another two million people at the present low standard of living of an average Chinese peasant. At least three million mou of irrigated land have been added in Sinkiang from 1949-55. It is said that in Sinkiang 110,000,000 mou could be added to the present 22,000,000.

464 701 708 668 177 241 An April 18, 1955, despatch reports: "The People's Liberation Army in Sinkiang has started spring sowing on the plains north and south of the T'ien-shan Mountains. Crops already sown include spring wheat, oil-bearing plants and long staple cotton. The army men are experimenting with the cultivation of long staple cotton in the Turfan Basin, where favorable conditions exist. This year the PLA farming units will cultivate over 66,000 hectares, or thirteen percent more than last year. More than half of the land will be ploughed by tractors. Adequate supplies of chemical fertilizer and insecticides are on hand."

708 653 312 668 177 503 464 A June 3, 1955, despatch reports: "The largest reservoir in Sinkiang is being enlarged this month by engineering units of the People's Liberation Army stationed in Sinkiang. When completed, the Men-chin reservoir, north of Urumchi, will have a storage capacity of sixty million cubic meters of water which can be used for irrigation."

An October 31, 1955 despatch reports: "A leading part has been played by the People's Liberation Army in irrigation works in Sinkiang. With their help, the peasants have constructed nine reservoirs, repaired irrigation canals and ditches, totalling 30,000 kilometers in length, built hundreds of new canals and added more subterranean waterways, a form of irrigation traditionally used in the region. In addition, the People's Liberation Army units have built and expanded works capable of irrigating 200,000 hectares, mostly farmed by local peasants. The army men also reclaimed over 73,000 hectares of wasteland and set up twenty-nine mechanized state farms."

708 241 668 177 464 [248] A November 3, 1955, despatch reports: "Manass Basin Agricultural Production Construction Troops of Sinkiang Military District of the People's Liberation Army plan to grow cotton in an area of 202,000 mou next year, one hundred forty-six percent larger than this year. These troops are now actively undertaking the preparatory works."

A December 24, 1955, despatch reports: "A new mechanized farm has been built in the Manass Basin by PLA. It has some 10,000 hectares of well irrigated farmland, part of which has already been sown in winter wheat. They plan to supply the state with nine thousand tons of grain and twenty-eight hundred tons of cotton next year."

701 708 464 466 668 177 000 The constitution of the so-called People's Liberation Army in Sinkiang has not been disclosed. But to use the regular army as a labor force in peace time is, to say the least, forced labor in disguise. (See section Forced Labor of General Handbook).

III. Conscript Labor

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Forced labor in the strict sense, or "corrective" labor, has however also been amply used. Conscript labor solved several of the problems connected with the labor situation in the Northwest. "Free" or induced labor had to be given certain incentives, such as higher wages and better living conditions in order to overcome non-economic barriers to labor mibility, such as language barriers, differences of customs and living standards, differences of climate, etc. For skilled and semi-skilled labor these incentives might prove a worthwhile investment; for unskilled labor, however, a cheaper labor sup was desirable. Conscript labor would also overcome the problem of labor discipline, which is prone to be particularly serious among laborers working far from home. Specifically conscript labor could be employed at a level of subsistence far below the minimum to be paid to a recruited or induced labor force; it could be employed in dangerous work without the necessity of using costly safeguards against accidents; and it had the advantage of perfect mobility and could be moved around without regard to family and other social ties. In the following, some reports, mostly collected in summer 1955 among Turkestani refugees are given to throw some light on the extent of conscript labor used in the Northwest.

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From a refugee in a colony in Yugoslavia, called Yengi Khotan "New Khotan":

In 1950 at an open People's court session in Cherchen, former Kuomintang officials, influential merchants and landowners were tried, sentenced and dispossessed of their property. They were transported to Charklik (Chin.: Chochiang) from where they proceeded in a southeastern direction where a new auto highway was being constructed. The prisoners were formed into working units which were led by Soviet soldiers of the Seventh Regiment. Halim estimates that at least six to ten thousand prisoners were working between Charklik and Timurlik. Each three hundred men was headed by a Russian corporal or sergeant. He said that the real masters of the area were the Russians, and he repeatedly emphasized that the latter treated even the Chinese Communist officials with no respect. Furthermore, he saw several mining projects in this area, especially gold mines. When he was transferred to the area of Tash-Kurghan (Turk.: Stone tomb) in 1953, he managed to flee to the Wakhan area of Afghanistan.

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Reports, published in Turk-i-stan, Arabian edition, March 1955, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, give a limited account of the railway construction between Turfan and Hami. It states that since May, 1953, about 80,000 prisoners have worked there. The main body of prisoners consisted of Chinese, but there were also thousands of New-Uighurs, Kazakhs, Mongols and

464 Tibetans. The prisoners were organized in military fashion,
466 i.e., squads, platoons, companies, battalions and regiments,
697 led by Chinese of the so-called Transport Army Corps. The
499 prisoners had to work twelve hours a day. They were
668 rigidly guarded by means of machine gun towers. Due to
177 undernourishment, overwork and rough weather conditions the death ratio was about thirty to fifty men a day. The equipment was of Russian origin and handled by Russian "specialists."

According to the same source about 180,000 were employed in levelling the terrain and building the embankment for the railway tracks on the route between Kulja-Wusu-Urumchi and Turfan. The prisoners were mainly Chinese but heavily intermingled with minority groups, either condemned insurgents, court-martialled soldiers or people who were tried by People's Courts for being "kulaks," saboteurs, "capitalistic spies" or former independent tribal leaders. Entire Tibetan tribes of the Sinkiang-Tibetan border area, who repeatedly revolted between 1950 and 1953 were finally captured and brought to the Bogda-Ula (mountain range with elevation up to 17,000 feet) where the passes and tunnels for a railway were constructed. The Communists first used Chinese prisoners but the death rate was extremely high because the Chinese, who were sent mainly from China proper, could not become accustomed to the rough climate of the T'ien-shan mountain range. The construction took
[648] place under the supervision of the 18th cavalry regiment of the 9th Soviet Cavalry division. Technicians and "specialists" are mainly Soviets. Administrators are Chinese Communists. At the same time Chinese military units are trained by Russians in regard to embankment constructions.

In the coal and petroleum area of Wusu, Urumchi and Kurla about 35,000 prisoners worked, reinforced by Soviet and Chinese engineers and technicians. Dozens of mountain roads were built by pioneer units of the People's Transport Army Corps which do all the dynamiting and bridge building, while prisoners do routine work.

464 Two Turkic refugees, now living in Germany, reported that
466 they were working for an irrigation building co-op in Mazartagh
697 on the Khotan River. Those co-ops usually receive fifty to a
668 hundred prisoners as handymen, who are guarded by a few
177 Chinese soldiers, who are stationed at the co-op.

464 Another Turkic refugee who was sentenced to ten years
466 (1950) for underpaying his employees in his fur trade enterprise
315 was sent to the oil field near Yü-men in Kansu. His sentence
697 was reduced to two years when he saved a bulldozer at the risk
668 of his life when an oil shaft blew up. He said about 18,000
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prisoners work on the oil fields. When he returned to his home town Keriya in 1953 he had to go through Soviet control posts at the Sinkiang-Kansu border towns of Hsinhsingsia and Kushui.

After his flight, the former Aksakal of Kizilbulak (northeast of Aksu) Abdul Azizi Hajji wrote an article in the Turkish newspaper Ulus, July 15, 1955, relating how all cities along the line Kashgar, Aksu, Karashahr, Urumchi, Turfan, Hami, Kulja, Ili, Chuguchak, including the Tarbagatai region, are occupied by at least four Soviet dividions, two of which definitely have been identified as tank dividions, equipped with T34 models.

A copy of the well-informed newspaper Al-Mizir (Cairo) of May 19, 1955, says that the total number of prisoners who are used as forced labor amounts to 380,000 in Sinkiang alone.